



LINCOLN CHAFEE

U.S. SENATOR

RHODE ISLAND

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COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY APPROVES CHAFEE SPONSORED HOMELAND SECURITY GRANT ENHANCEMENT ACT

***Legislation Would Increase Rhode Island's Share of
Homeland Security Grant funding***

WASHINGTON, DC – Today in a unanimous vote, U.S. Senator Lincoln Chafee and the other members of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs approved S. 21, the Homeland Security Grant Enhancement Act. The Act is a bipartisan compromise that would consolidate the three primary Department of Homeland Security (DHS) grant programs, streamline the grant application process for states and localities, and increase accountability for how allocated funding is used. Chafee is a cosponsor of the legislation.

In addition, the Act would increase the amount of threat-based funding, distributed on the basis of risks and vulnerabilities. At the same time, the Act continues to allocate to each state a minimum baseline amount based on a “sliding scale formula,” taking into account population and population density. While some states will see a decrease in their baseline funding, Rhode Island benefits from this formula, due to its high population density. Additionally, the bill would also establish a new application process for metropolitan regional funding, which would place an emphasis on larger metropolitan regions, as opposed to individual cities.

“The approval of this legislation by members of the committee represents a reasonable solution to a hard fought battle between advocates on both sides of this debate. I am encouraged that we were able to come together and find compromise on such a critical issue, important to Americans everywhere. I am especially pleased with the funding formula agreed to, which places emphasis on larger, at-risk areas while also recognizing that all states have potential risks, and that terrorists might strike ‘soft targets’ outside of

major cities. In 1995, very few would have predicted that the federal building in Oklahoma City would be targeted, and this bill will help protect other vulnerable locations that might be overlooked,” Senator Chafee explained.

Under the fiscal year (FY) 2005 Homeland Security allocations, which included awards from three DHS grant programs, Rhode Island received a total of \$14 million in appropriations. Under the proposed formula, the Congressional Research Service estimates that Rhode Island would qualify for approximately \$24.19 million in FY 2006, an increase of more than \$10 million, and \$18.46 million more than President Bush’s proposed allocation.

“Should the legislation be approved by the Congress and enacted into law, Rhode Island will benefit from increased funding due to its high population density as well its potential vulnerabilities as a coastal state. This legislation promises to direct funding in an equitable way to ensure that both Rhode Island and America are on the cutting edge of safety and preparedness in case of an attack,” Chafee continued.

In addition, the committee approved two other bills cosponsored by Senator Chafee: S. 494, the Federal Employee Protection of Disclosures Act, would increase protection for whistleblowers who report government waste, fraud, and abuse; and S. 501, a bill which would to provide a site in Washington, D.C. for the National Women's History Museum.

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